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The Mauricio Gastón Institute  
for Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy

# Latinos in Meriden | Connecticut

by Daniel W. Vasquez, Research Associate

*The Mauricio Gastón Institute of the University of Massachusetts Boston conducts research on and for the Latino population. A goal is to generate the kind of information and analysis necessary to develop sound public policy, and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. In an effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced a series of basic demographic profiles for the states and selected cities of New England, based on the United States Census 2000.*

Census 2000 data include changes in the way people were counted. The most significant change is to allow persons to select more than one race, creating a new multiracial category of “two or more races”, but meaning people may not be included in the race with which they most identify. There was, however, no way to choose more than one ethnicity; one must choose either Latino or not. Throughout this profile, numbers reflect Latinos of all races, or non-Latinos by race, with persons of two or more races counted separately. All categorizations are based solely on self-identification. All of this complicates comparisons between 1990 and 2000 data. However, the concepts are similar enough to make trends and patterns clear.

In Meriden, the general population changes from 1990 to 2000 were similar to national and state trends. The population of people of color — African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders — grew at a higher rate than did the population of non-Hispanic Whites, which actually shrank (see table 1). The total population of Meriden decreased by 2.1%, and its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 4,152 or 51%, although Asians had a higher percent increase. Latinos now represent 21.1% of the population, an increase of 7.4 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. Meriden has the eighth largest population of Latinos in Connecticut and the 17th largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Bridgeport ranks seventh in the state.

Table 1

Meriden - Growth by Ethnicity							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Hispanic or Latino	12,296	21.1	8,144	13.7	4,152	51.0	7.4
White	40,709	69.9	48,481	81.5	-7,772	-16.0	-11.6
Black or African American	3,321	5.7	2,315	3.9	1,006	43.5	1.8
American Indian and Alaska Native	123	0.2	94	0.2	29	30.9	0.1
Asian <sup>a</sup>	783	1.3	390	0.7	398	102.1	0.7
Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	5	0.0					
Some other race	75	0.1	55	0.1	20	36.4	0.0
Two or more races <sup>b</sup>	932	1.6					
Total	58,244		59,479		-1,235	-2.1	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Note: Growth figures will not balance due to the new multiracial category.

<sup>a</sup> 'Asian and Pacific Islander' was split for the 2000 census. Growth and changes reflect combined total.

<sup>b</sup> There was no equivalent category in the 1990 census.

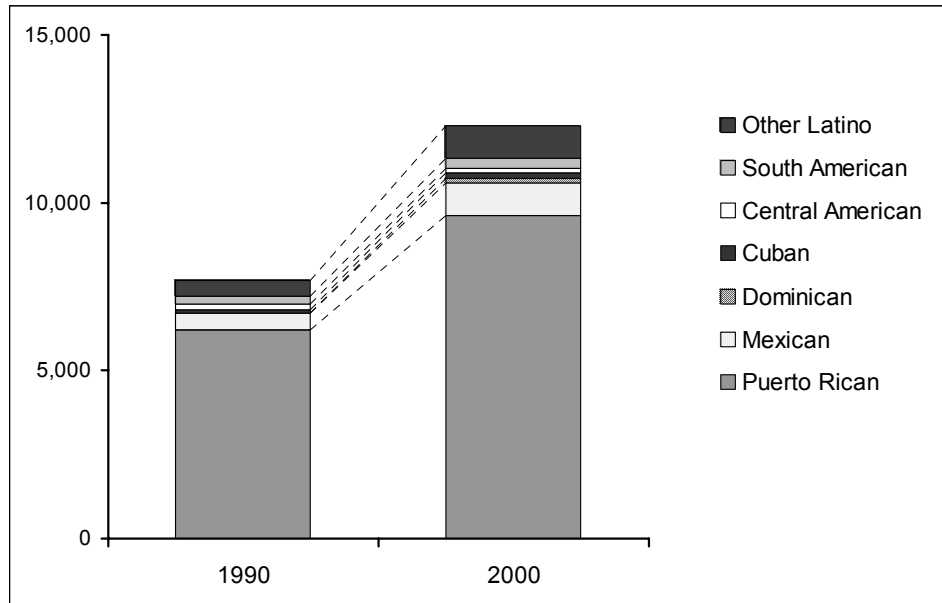
Table 2

Meriden - National Origin of Latinos					
	2000		1990 <sup>a</sup>		Growth
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number Percent
Hispanic or Latino	12,296		7,695		4,601 59.8
Mexican	948	7.7	494	6.4	454 91.9
Puerto Rican	9,637	78.4	6,229	80.9	3,408 54.7
Cuban	165	1.3	78	1.0	87 111.5
Dominican Republic	149	1.2	4	0.1	145 3625.0
Other Central American	140	1.1	189	2.5	-49 -25.9
Other South American	289	2.4	230	3.0	59 25.7
Other Hispanic or Latino	968	7.9	471	6.1	497 105.5

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(b).

<sup>a</sup> 1990 figures for nationality are from sample data only and differ from population counts.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1  
Meriden - Growth and Change of the Latino Population



All Latino national-origin groups grew significantly between 1990<sup>1</sup> and 2000. The largest group in Meriden is Puerto Rican, at 78.4%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Mexicans. “Other” Latinos were among the fastest-growing population - behind Dominicans and Cubans, growing by 105.5%, a trend seen across the U.S. (see table 2 and figure 1). A person is counted as “Other” if they write in “Spanish” or give an answer that can't be assigned to a particular nationality (such as “Latino”), or if they identify more than one origin, or leave the answer blank. Future scholarly studies may better describe the composition of this category. The detailed breakdown of Central and South Americans is available at the Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder service, online at: [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov).

Table 3

Meriden - Households by Tenure							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change
Latino Headed Households	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	in Percent
Total Households	3,730		2,459		1,271	51.7	
Owners	1,097	29.4	684	27.8	413	60.4	1.6
Renters	2,633	70.6	1,775	72.2	858	48.3	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 70.6% versus 29.4%, although there has been a 1.6% increase in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). Still, this is much lower than the state average of 66.8%. Although there has

been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 77.9%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 27.1% of Latino-headed households, slightly more than the Connecticut average 24.5%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 24.9% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.9%, and slightly more than it was in 1990.

Table 4

<b>Meriden - Family Structure</b>						
	<b>2000</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>Growth</b>	<b>Change</b>
Latino Headed Households	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>in Percent</b>
Families:	2,907	77.9	1,940	78.9	49.8	-1.0
with related children <sup>a</sup> :						
Married Couple, with children	1,011	27.1	723	29.4	39.8	-2.3
Female Head, with children	930	24.9	583	23.7	59.5	1.2
Male Head, with children	195	5.2	91	3.7	114.3	1.5
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	528	14.2	382	15.5	38.2	-1.4
Single, no children	243	6.5	161	6.5	50.9	0.0
Non-Family Household	823	22.1	519	21.1	58.6	1.0
Total Households	3,730		2,459		51.7	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

<sup>a</sup> Own or related children under 18 only.

#### *Data Sources:*

All available at American Fact Finder [online service]: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

U.S. Census Bureau:

2000: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) 100% Data.

1990(a): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) 100% Data.

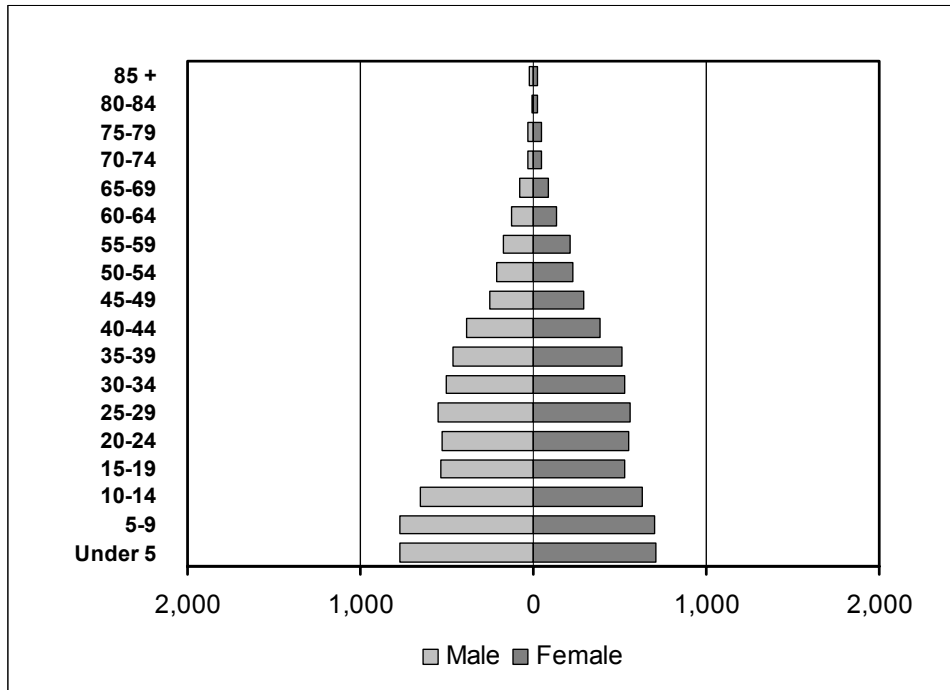
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

1992: 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: GPO.

#### *Notes:*

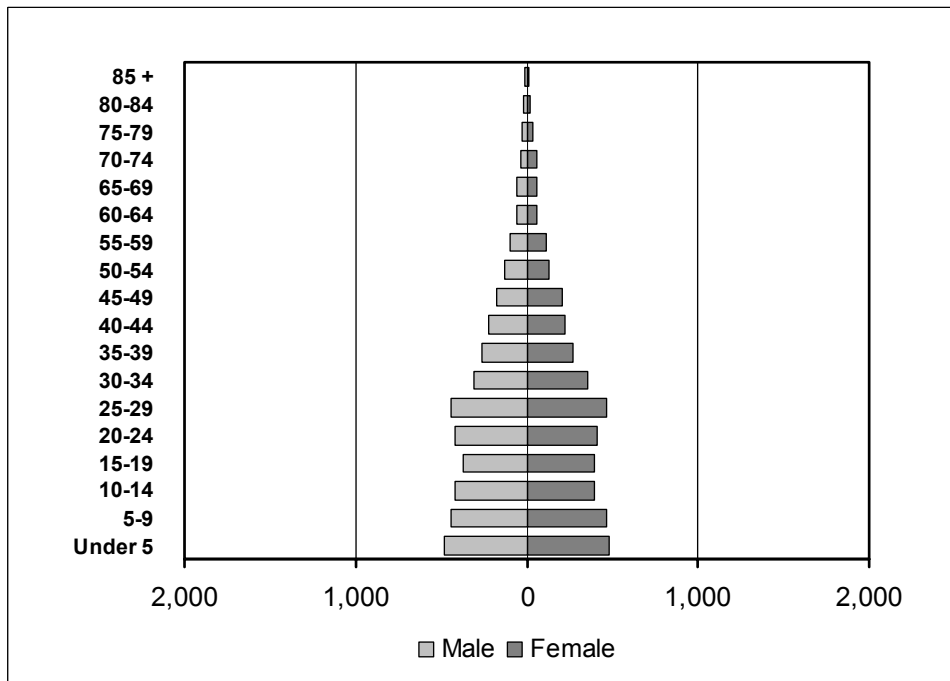
<sup>1</sup> Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. There are sources of error in any census or survey; however the estimates here are accurate enough to note trends and patterns.

Figure 2  
Meriden - Age Profile 2000



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Figure 3  
Meriden - Age Profile 1990



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

The age composition of Latinos in Meriden has changed. There has been an increase among all age groups, but especially among those in the middle years. Even though there are many more children, the overall Latino population is maturing (see figures 2 and 3).

While the Latino population in Meriden and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 43% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly fewer than the 42.3% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 23.9 is much younger than the overall Connecticut median age of 37.4. Women still tend to be older than men, but the gap closed during the 1990s. In addition to becoming relatively older, both Latinos and Latinas became less concentrated in the 20-29 age group (see tables 6 and 7).

Table 5

<b>Meriden - Latinos by Age</b>					
	<b>2000</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>Growth</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 10 years	2,950	24.0	1,866	22.9	58.1
10-19	2,338	19.0	1,580	19.4	48.0
20-29	2,192	17.8	1,734	21.3	26.4
30-39	2,008	16.3	1,204	14.8	66.8
40-49	1,315	10.7	832	10.2	58.1
50-59	830	6.8	475	5.8	74.7
60-69	425	3.5	234	2.9	81.6
70 and over	238	1.9	219	2.7	8.7
Total	12,296		8,144		51.0
Median Age	23.9		23.9		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 6

<b>Meriden - Latino Males by Age</b>					
	<b>2000</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>Growth</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 10 years	1,545	25.3	921	23.1	67.8
10-19	1,185	19.4	790	19.8	50.0
20-29	1,080	17.7	859	21.6	25.7
30-39	968	15.9	571	14.3	69.5
40-49	638	10.4	400	10.0	59.5
50-59	391	6.4	232	5.8	68.5
60-69	204	3.3	118	3.0	72.9
70 and over	96	1.6	92	2.3	4.3
Total	6,107		3,983		53.3
Median Age	23.1		23.5		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 7

<b>Meriden - Latina Females by Age</b>					
	<b>2000</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>Growth</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Under 10 years	1,405	22.7	945	22.7	48.7
10-19	1,153	18.6	790	19.0	45.9
20-29	1,112	18.0	875	21.0	27.1
30-39	1,040	16.8	633	15.2	64.3
40-49	677	10.9	432	10.4	56.7
50-59	439	7.1	243	5.8	80.7
60-69	221	3.6	116	2.8	90.5
70 and over	142	2.3	127	3.1	11.8
Total	6,189		4,161		48.7
Median Age	24.8		24.3		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.